

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in West Palm Beach, Florida

September 9, 2012

The President. Hello, West Palm Beach! Oh, it is good to be back! You know what, you guys sound pretty fired up! You sound like you might be ready to go. I'm telling you. Well——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. It is good to be back. It is good to see some great friends in the house. We've got your outstanding Senator Bill Nelson in the house. We've got your mayor, Jeri Muoio, in the house. We've got Congressman Ted Deutch in the house. And the chairwoman of the Democratic Party, our great friend, Debbie Wasserman Schultz is in the house. And all of you are in the house.

Now, we just had our convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. The people could not have been nicer. Michelle, she was pretty good. So I want to give advice to young men out there: When you marry, you marry up; you improve the gene pool. [*Laughter*]

President Clinton was amazing. Somebody sent out a tweet right after he spoke; they said, he needs to be made secretary of explaining stuff. [*Laughter*]

And then, on Thursday, I laid out the stakes in this election. Now, I know I may be preaching a little bit to the choir, but—[*laughter*]—but I want you to know I'm going to need you to then go out and preach to the unconverted.

Both sides have now made their arguments. And there's a choice that we've got to make, and it's the clearest choice we've seen in a generation, not just between two candidates or two parties, but a choice between two fundamentally different visions of our future.

We want to restore the basic bargain that built the largest middle class and the strongest economy the world's ever known: a bargain that says hard work pays off, that responsibility is rewarded, that everybody does their fair share and everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is playing by the same rules, from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC.

That's the basic bargain that led me to run for President. It's what allowed me and Michelle to have extraordinary opportunities in our lives. And we want to make sure the next generation has those same opportunities.

And we had just gone through a decade in which jobs were being shipped overseas, and families were having trouble making ends meet, and they were having to rack up more debt just to pay tuition or fill up a gas tank. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

We spent the last 3½ years trying to recover from all the damage that was done. And we've made progress, but not enough. We've got more to do. And so now the question is, which direction do we go?

Audience members. Forward!

The President. Now, the Republicans, they disagree with you.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, don't boo, vote. [*Applause*] Vote.

Audience member. I love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back.

They had their convention here in Florida and they talked a lot about me. [*Laughter*] But they didn't talk a lot about you. They talked about everything they think is wrong with America, but they didn't really talk about how to make it right. They want your vote, but they didn't really talk about their plan. And that's because their plan boils down to tax cuts, tax cuts, gut a few regulations, and then some more tax cuts. [*Laughter*] Tax cuts when times are good. Tax cuts when times are bad. Tax cuts when we've got a surplus. Tax cuts when we have a deficit. Tax cuts to help you lose a few pounds—[*laughter*—tax cuts to improve your love life. [*Laughter*] Whatever is wrong with you, they think tax cuts, especially for folks at the top, will cure all ills.

Now, I've cut taxes for folks who need it. For middle class families, for small businesses. But I don't believe another round of tax cuts for millionaires are going to bring jobs back from overseas. I don't think another round of tax cuts for billionaires that involve slashing aid to students to pay for it or asking middle class families to pay more, that somehow that's going to reduce the deficit or help grow our economy.

I certainly don't think that it makes a lot of sense for us to be looking at creating a voucher for Medicare to pay for some tax cuts for folks who don't need them and weren't even asking for them. That's not who we are. That's not how we made progress in this country.

I don't think rolling back regulations on Wall Street so that we don't have another taxpayer-funded bailout is a smart idea.

I don't think rolling back health care that is helping Americans all across Florida and all across the country is a good idea. I don't want to go backwards. We have been there. We have done that. It didn't work. We're moving forward. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. [*Applause*] Forward!

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Now, I won't pretend that the path I'm offering is easy. I never have. These problems built up over decades; they're going to take more than a few years to solve. But we can move forward in the right direction. And I am confident we've got what it takes.

Our opponents, they've been talking about how America is in decline. They're wrong. We've got the best workers in the world, the best businesspeople in the world. We've got the best universities in the world, the best researchers in the world. We're a young nation. We're a diverse nation. We attract talent from every corner of the globe.

So no matter how much the other side, for political reasons, tries to paint things as bleak, don't believe them. There's not another nation on Earth that wouldn't trade places with us. Our problems can be solved. Our challenges can be met. The path I offer is harder, but it leads to a better place. I am asking you to choose that future. I am asking you to go forward with me. [*Applause*] I am asking you to go forward with me.

And let me tell you exactly—let me repeat, for those of you who didn't catch it on Thursday, what I'm talking about when I say "moving forward." We are going to put together a real, achievable plan to build this economy on a stronger foundation. It starts with no longer shipping jobs overseas. Let's export goods made here in America.

After a decade of decline, we've now created half a million jobs over the last 2 years just in manufacturing. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top. So we can take Mr. Romney's advice and continue to give even more tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, or we can reward companies that are investing in new jobs and new workers and new factories here in the United States of America. That's what we're fighting for.

I want to help American factories and small businesses export more. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. You can make that happen.

Second part of our plan, let's control our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on the same gallon of gas. That's good for your pocketbook. It's good for the environment.

We've doubled our use of renewable energy like wind and solar. Today, thousands of Americans have jobs building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. And today, the United States is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly two decades.

So you have a choice. We can build on that progress, or we can reverse it like my opponent recommends.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I think he's wrong. Don't boo, vote.

Unlike my opponent, I don't intend to let oil companies write our country's energy plan or endanger our coastlines. And I don't want them to keep collecting \$4 billion of corporate welfare from our taxpayers.

We've got a better path. We keep investing in wind and solar, clean coal technology, farmers and scientists harnessing new biofuels to power our cars and trucks, construction workers building homes and factories that are more energy efficient, developing a hundred years' supply of natural gas. We can cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and support more than 600,000 new jobs in natural gas alone. That's moving forward. We're not going backwards.

Third, we're going to build on the reforms we have initiated and make sure that Americans are getting the chance to get the skills they need to compete in this 21st-century economy. Education was the key to opportunity for me, the key to opportunity for Michelle, the key to opportunity for many of you. It's the gateway to a middle class life.

And that's why, for the first time in a generation, we pushed every State almost, to answer our call to raise standards for teaching and learning. Some of the worst schools in the nation have made real gains in reading and math. Millions of students are saving money, paying less for college, because of the work we did to keep the student loan program on track and improve the Pell grant program.

So you can take their advice and gut education. Or we can decide in the United States, no child should have her dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom or because a family can't afford to send her to college. No company should have to look for a worker someplace else because they couldn't find the right skills for workers here in the United States.

So I need you to help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers, improve early childhood education. Let's provide 2 million more workers the chance to learn skills at community colleges for jobs that are out there right now. And let's work with colleges and universities to lower tuition, because it is not a luxury for young people. It is a necessity. That's what I mean when I say we need to move forward, not backwards.

We can meet these goals together. My plan would reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. Independent analysis shows my plan would reduce our deficit by \$4 trillion. We've got the math all done. We've laid it out there. People have evaluated it. People have analyzed it. I've already worked with the Republicans in Congress to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending. And I'm willing to do more with Republicans.

I want to reform our Tax Code so that's it's simple and it's fair. But I also think it makes sense for folks like me to pay higher taxes on our incomes over \$250,000, the same rate Bill Clinton had when he was President, the same rate that created 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, a lot of millionaires to boot.

Now, I guess my opponent has a plan. But there's one thing missing from it.

Audience member. Arithmetic.

The President. Arithmetic. Give that young lady an "A." She's been doing her homework.

When Governor Romney and his allies in Congress say that the most important thing is to lower our deficit, and then he starts by calling for trillions of dollars more in new tax breaks for wealthy folks. And they were asked about it today. They couldn't answer. [*Laughter*] They couldn't answer the question of how, you already have deficits, you add \$5 trillion of new tax cuts, \$2 trillion in new defense spending, and somehow you're going to close the deficit without raising taxes on middle class families? They did not take their arithmetic course. They need to talk to this young lady and get some tutoring. They need to stay after school. They need to get some extra study hall in there. No recess for you. [*Laughter*]

Look, I refuse to go along with a plan that asks middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I refuse to ask students to pay more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor and elderly or disabled just so those with the most can pay less.

And—and I want you to hear me now—I will never turn Medicare into a voucher. We won't do that. Here's what you need to know. I have strengthened Medicare. We've added years to the life of Medicare. We did it by getting rid of taxpayer subsidies to insurance companies that weren't making people healthier. The other side knows that. In fact, it was in their budget: all the savings we achieved. Now they're pretending like somehow it affected beneficiaries when they know it doesn't.

We took that money that was going to the insurance companies, used part of it to help lower prescription drug costs for seniors, to offer free preventive care for seniors. We thought that was a good idea. They may think it's a bad idea, but I don't. They want to give the money back to the insurance companies, put them in charge of Medicare.

Audience members. No!

The President. There was one report that just said that by the end of the next decade under their plan, you would see as much as \$16 to 26 billion in new profits for insurance companies, paid for by taxpayers. Why would we do that? The cost to folks who are currently on Medicare could rise by thousands of dollars so that insurance companies are making those billions of dollars in profits. That's not a good plan.

Audience members. No!

The President. So here's the bottom line: Their plan bankrupts Medicare over the long term and, actually, over the short term, means the trust fund runs out of money by 2016. Our plan strengthens Medicare. I believe no American should ever have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. I believe every American who works hard should be able to retire with the dignity that they have earned.

And I want to be honest with you: We're going to have to strengthen Medicare for the long haul, and that requires some reforms. But we'll do it by reforming the way that health care delivery system works so that we're reducing the costs of health care, not by asking seniors to pay thousands of dollars more.

And we're going to keep the promise of Social Security by taking the responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street.

Now, our prosperity at home is linked to our policies abroad, and I've got a track record that you can look at. I said I'd end the war in Iraq; I did. I said we'd begin bringing troops home from Afghanistan, and we are. And while a new tower rises above the New York skyline, and as we pause to remember those that were lost this coming Tuesday on September 11, we know that Al Qaida is on the path to defeat and Usama bin Laden is dead.

So we've got a track record that you can look at. And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. Our troops when they take off those uniforms, we will serve them as well as they've served us, because they shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home.

But my opponent has a different idea. He said the way we ended the war in Iraq was "tragic," doesn't have a plan to end the war in Afghanistan. But you know what, if you don't even mention Afghanistan, that's a problem when you accept the nomination. So I'm assuming he doesn't have a plan.

And while my opponent would spend more money on military programs that our Joint Chiefs don't even want, at a time when we're supposed to be reducing our deficit, I'd use the money that we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and put more people back to work rebuilding bridges and roads and schools and runways. We need to do some nation-building here at home. That's what we need to do.

So that's the choice we now face. That's what this election comes down to. The other side says bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations are the only way. They basically argue, you know what, since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you don't have health care, hope you don't get sick. If you can't afford college, borrow money from your parents.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's what he said. I mean, I quoted him. I didn't make that up.
[Laughter]

We've got a different idea. That's not what America is about. We believe in individual initiative. We believe you're not entitled to success, you've got to earn it. We believe in hard work. We believe in rewarding the dreamers and the risk takers and the strivers, the small-businesspeople who make this country run. We believe in the free enterprise system. But we also believe we've got obligations to one another. We also believe this country only works when we're thinking about future generations, not just this one.

We understand America is not just about what can be done for us, but what can be done by us, together, as one people, as one Nation. That's what we believe. That's what we mean when we say we're going forward.

Four years ago—4 years ago—because you believed, because of your efforts, we were able to bring about change we hadn't seen in decades. You're the reason that seniors here in Florida are paying about \$600 less for prescription drugs because of Obamacare. You did that. You're the reason that there are folks all across this State who can now afford to go to college. You're the reason that happened.

You're the reason that all across this State, people who were in danger of losing their homes were able to stay in their homes. That's because of you. You made that possible. You're the reason that a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledges allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the country that they love.

You're the reason we ended "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reason that families are able to say to their loved ones who served so bravely, "Welcome home." You're the reason.

But we've got a long way to go. And you know, sometimes on a journey you get tired, and there will be voices that whisper in your head to be cynical, to think you can't make it. You've got to turn that away. You can't buy into that cynicism, the notion that change isn't possible, because if you don't believe it, it won't happen. If you give up, then the other voices will fill the vacuum: the lobbyists and the special interests, the folks who are writing the \$10 million checks to run all those negative ads.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. The folks who are trying to make it harder for you to vote, Washington politicians who want to decide who can get married, and control choices that women should be making about their own health care, that's what's going to fill the vacuum.

We can't let that happen, Florida. We've come too far to turn back now. If you're not registered to vote, I need you to register. Go to gottaregister.com. If you don't know how to vote—maybe you're 17, turning 18, first time—go to gottavote.com. If you're already registered and you're already going to be voting, then you've got to grab your friends, you've got to grab your neighbors, you've got to grab your cousins, your aunts and your uncles—you've got to corner your—

Audience member. Grandparents!

The President. And your grandparents. [*Laughter*] You've got to talk to your coworkers. Don't just talk to each other: Go find some of your Republican friends. Yes. They're good people. [*Applause*] They're good people. They just need more information from you. [*Laughter*]

Go talk to some Independents. Make some phone calls. Knock on some doors. Volunteer. We need you to work hard. We've only—we've got less than 2 months left, but let me tell you something: If you give it your all for these next 2 months, I'm confident we're going to get there. We can't let up now, because we've got more good jobs to create. We've got more homegrown energy to generate. We've got more good schools to build and more great teachers to hire. We've got more young people to send to college. We've got more troops to bring home. We've got more vets to take care of. We've got more doors of opportunity we've got to open up to everybody who's willing to fight for it and work for it.

And if you do, we'll win Palm Beach County. And if we win Palm Beach County, we will win Florida. And if we win Florida, we win this election. We'll finish what we started and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:15 p.m. at the Palm Beach County Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Ben Greenman, staff editor, the New Yorker magazine.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies : West Palm Beach, FL.

Locations: West Palm Beach, FL.

Names: Clinton, William J.; Deutch, Theodore E.; Greenman, Ben; Muoio, Geraldine; Nelson, C. William; Obama, Michelle; Romney, W. Mitt; Wasserman Schultz, Deborah.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, repeal; Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Democratic Party : Democratic National Committee; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : Postsecondary education :: Career training and continuing education; Education : Standards and school accountability"; Elections : Voter participation; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Energy : Fuel efficiency standards, strengthening efforts; Energy : Oil and gas industry :: Subsidies, elimination; Florida : Democratic Party events; Florida : President's visits; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Housing : Mortgage refinancing programs; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Iraq : U.S. and coalition forces, withdrawal; Social Security and retirement : Social Security program; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Taxation : Tax relief; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Terrorism : September 11, 2001; Veterans : Benefits.

DCPD Number: DCPD201200702.